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no suggestion that the sighting line should extend along the shaft of the putter. In fact, the teaching is that the sighting line should not extend upwardly along the shaft of the putter. The teaching and suggestion of Reach is that the sighting line is to be viewed from above as a line that is greater than the face of the club (column 1, lines 30-44 and column 1, line 53 to column 2, line 2).

If one applied a tape, as in Seisaku, to the shaft of the putter in Reach, there would no longer be one line to sight but two lines, i.e. the line on the head and the tape on the shaft. Since the user is intent on hitting a golf ball with the face of the putter, the suggestions of Seisaku and Reach are that a sighting line be placed solely on the putter head or solely on the putter shaft but not both.

In Seisaku, a tape is attached to the shaft of a putter but is not aligned with any line on the head of the putter.

If one of ordinary skill in the art were motivated to combine the teachings of Reach and Seisaku, such would result in a sighting line as in Reach on the putter head and a tape on the shaft of the putter without the tape and sighting line being in alignment. This is evidenced by Seisaku's teaching and suggestion that the apparent line on the putter head surface is not in alignment with the tape on the shaft.

Thus, if the illustrated line on the putter head surface in Seisaku is an alignment line, the clear teaching of Seisaku is that the tape should not be in alignment with a line on the face of the putter.

There is clearly no teaching in Reach or Seisaku or the references taken together of having a sighting line on the head of a putter and along the shaft of the putter.

The Examiner appears to acknowledge the fact the line and tape appearing in Seisaku are not in alignment with one another. However, the Examiner considers this to be irrelevant on the basis that claim 1 does not require this limitation. Issue is taken in this respect. Claim 1 requires "an alignment means extending along a surface of such shaft and said head...". Clearly, the "alignment means" must be in alignment with itself. Furthermore, claim 2 further defines the alignment means as "a continuous line."

Assuming one of ordinary skill in the art were to follow the suggestions of the Examiner, this would result in a tape being applied to the shaft of the Reach putter.

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However, since the tape 4 is wider than the sighting line illustrated in Reach, the user would be presented with an optical problem, namely, attempting to define a centerline of the tape and a centerline of the sighting line. Of course, there is also the problem of properly aligning a tape that is applied to the putter shaft with the sighting line which is on the head of the putter.

Further, merely extending the tape of Seisaku onto the putter head presents the problem of having the tape adapt to the off-set surfaces between the putter shaft 3 and the putter head 1 as indicated in Fig. 1, that is to say, the transition between the cylindrical shaft 3 and the surfaces of the putter head. The problem is further exacerbated with a putter as indicated in Fig. 2 of Seisaku.

For the above reasons, the suggestion of combining the teachings and suggestions of Reach and Seisaku would not result in the claimed structure. Accordingly a rejection of claim 1 as being unpatentable over the teachings of Reach and Seisaku is not warranted pursuant to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 103.

Note is made that claim 1 requires the "alignment means" to be "in a plane perpendicular to " the longitudinal axis of the shaft (i.e. the alignment means and axis are in the same plane) and "parallel to said striking face of said head". That is to say, the shaft and line (alignment means) are required to be in the same vertical plane as the line (alignment means) on the head and this plane is required to be orthogonal to the intended putting line.

As is known, some putter shafts are designed to be tilted forward or backward from the vertical plane in the address position. This would throw off the alignment means. The plane of the shaft and putter head line must be coincident and vertical and should be aligned perpendicular to the line of putt.

As described in Applicant's description at page 3, after a golfer has determined the path in which a golf ball is to be directed, the alignment means on the putter is used to align the putter with the cup. That is to say, when addressing the ball, the golfer visually aligns the alignment line on the putter with his/her eye so that the plane of the line is perpendicular to an imaginary line from the cup to the face of the club head. Thus, by keeping the alignment line perpendicular to this imaginary line when

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addressing the ball and subsequently when the putter is swung forwardly toward the cup, the face of the putter should strike the ball so that the ball rolls forwardly along the imaginary line directly toward the cup.

Where the green has undulations between the ball and the cup, the golfer may select a spot on the green toward which the ball is to be putted to compensate for the undulations. In this case, the plane of the alignment line is made perpendicular to the spot on the green towards which the ball is to be directed.

There is no teaching in Reach or Seisaku to align the putter with the cup or intended path.

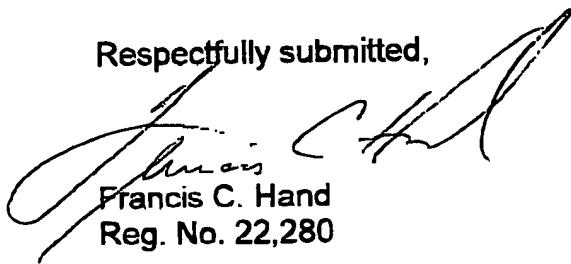
Claims 2 to 4 depend from claim 1 and are believed to be allowable for similar reasons.

Further, claim 2 requires the alignment means to be "a continuous line". There is no teaching in Reach or Seisaku that would motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to continue the sighting line of Reach along the putter shaft. Likewise, there is no teaching in Reach or Seisaku that would motivate one of ordinary skill in the art to extend the tape of Seisaku along the putter head surface.

Claim 3 depends from claim 1 and further recites that the alignment means is "a discontinuous line". Both Reach and Seisaku suggest the use of continuous sighting lines or tapes. There is no teaching of a discontinuous line. Accordingly, in the absence of any suggestion in these two references, there is no motivation for one of ordinary skill in the art to use a discontinuous line as the alignment means. Accordingly, a rejection of claim 3 is not warranted pursuant to the provisions of 35 U.S.C. 103.

The application is believed to be in condition for allowance and such is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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